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Dan Smoot Report

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CAN CONSERVATIVES SAVE THE REPUBLIC?

No leading politician in America has ever admitted being a socialist. Most of them support programs which are converting the federal government into an all-powerful taxing-and-spending agency which controls and manipulates the affairs of all the people, in the interest of "promoting the general welfare." That is socialism, but the politicians who support it generally call themselves "liberals" or "moderates." For the purpose of brevity in this *Report*, I will call them what they ought honestly to call themselves — what they are — *socialists.*

It does little good in the battle against socialism to send to the federal Congress men who are *just conservatives.* They seem to suffer a sea change after they get there. Men who are merely conservative have no solid ground to stand on when resisting socialist programs.

The conservative leadership we have had in Congress for many years permits itself to be maneuvered into supporting the very socialistic programs which it thinks it is resisting.

Consider, for example, the issue of public housing.

The Constitution delegates to the federal government no power to provide housing for the people; and the Tenth Amendment says that powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved to the states, or to the people.

The federal government's first venture into the illegal field of public housing occurred during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The announced purpose was *economic* — to stimulate activity in the building industry and thus to provide jobs and improve the whole economy.

Immediately after World War II, the announced purpose of public housing was to relieve critical housing shortages caused by the war.

But soon, the real, socialist purpose of public housing emerged. Public housing was no longer pushed for economic reasons, but for social reasons. The purpose of public housing was to fulfill

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the federal government's responsibility to "provide decent housing" for all the poor of the land — a responsibility which the federal government does not have, and cannot legally assume.

In the New Deal days, such conservative opposition to public housing as did exist was based, for the most part, on constitutional grounds: the federal government had no legal authority in this field.

As socialist propaganda converted public housing into a program "to provide decent housing for the poor," conservatives became sensitive to socialist jibes about being callously indifferent to the suffering of the poor, and began to abandon their stand on constitutional principles. Conservatives began opposing public housing on economic grounds — saying the government could not afford as much of it as socialists demanded, and so on. Before long, conservatives were supporting "moderate, sensible" public housing proposals, while resisting extravagant proposals of socialists.

Thus, conservatives performed an invaluable service for socialists. In supporting a little public housing, they abandoned the only real bulwark against socialized housing — namely, the constitutional principle that the federal government has no legal authority to operate in this field at all. By trying to cut down and hold back socialist proposals for massive public housing programs, the conservatives contrived to make themselves look stingy, heartless, and fearful of change.

Conservatives resorted to political strategy.

The first major, general public housing law — written for the broad social purpose of providing housing for the poor — was the Public Housing Act of 1949. This law was written by Mr. Conservative Republican, Senator Robert A. Taft. Previously, Senator Taft had been an opponent of public housing. He knew that whatever money the government takes away from the people for the purpose of providing housing will, in the end, provide less housing and worse housing than private enterprise would have provided if government had left the people alone, permitting them to keep and invest their own money.

Senator Taft wrote the Public Housing Act of 1949 to keep liberals (socialists) from writing a worse bill. He hoped to innoculate the nation with a little bit of socialism, to ward off a major infection. But Senator Taft's little bit of socialism turned out to be like a little bit of pregnancy. It grew — and became the basis for subsequent legislation and Supreme Court decisions which produced urban renewal, model cities, rent supplements, metropolitan government, and so on.

Consider also the issue of socialized medicine.

Socialists tried in vain to get medical benefits included in the Social Security Act of 1935.

At intervals for the next fifteen years, socialists offered compulsory health insurance proposals, which Congress consistently rejected. Again, however, conservatives abandoned principles. Beginning in the congressional election year of 1950 and continuing in election years thereafter, Congress adopted compromise amendments to the Social Security Act, extending some kind of medical care to specified groups of people covered by social security.

Concurrently, the various administrative agencies of government initiated and expanded, from year to year, their own medical care systems for specific groups of citizens.

Through these means, socialists in 20 years (1936 to 1956) managed to socialize approximately 25% of the medical profession. Yet, all this time, conservatives in Congress claimed they were successfully resisting efforts to socialize medicine.

In 1957, U. S. Representative Aime Forand (Rhode Island Democrat) introduced the Forand bill — to do what socialists had proposed in 1935: that is, add medical benefits for everyone covered by social security.

The Forand bill made no headway in 1957, but served as a focal point for a gigantic propaganda campaign based on the assertion that millions of Americans were suffering and dying

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from want of medical care. This assertion was false; but conservatives neglected even to challenge it.

Conservatives also neglected to point out that the socialist assertion, *even if true*, was, by itself, proof that socialized medicine is harmful rather than helpful to "the national health." Notice: the "national health picture" which socialists were drawing in the late 1950's (after 20 years of partially socialized medicine, financed with literally billions of tax dollars) was much uglier than the "national health picture" which socialists drew in the 1930's, before socialized medicine really got started.

Socialists, of course, claimed that government's efforts in the medical field had failed because they had been too limited and too timid. And for this, they blamed conservatives.

In an effort to counter the charge that conservative do-nothingness was responsible for the national bad health, conservatives eventually (May, 1960) presented what they called their Positive Alternative to the socialized medicine proposed by the Forand bill. The conservative proposal was a complicated mess of federal grants in aid to state governments to help pay the cost of medical care for people in specified age groups within specified income groups. It was, of course, just as unconstitutional and just as wrong in principle as the Forand proposal.

The Health of Our People became a major campaign issue between Richard Nixon and John Kennedy in 1960.

Kennedy stood foursquare for improving national health through the Forand approach — adding medical-benefit provisions to the Social Security Act. Nixon stood foursquare for the conservative's Positive Alternative of giving aid to the states for medical care.

Nixon called his proposal the "free enterprise" way, and condemned Kennedy's proposal as "opening the door for socialized medicine." Kennedy said Nixon's proposal was halting, faltering, inadequate.

In August, 1960, Congress passed the Kerr-Mills Act, which authorized a diminished version of the Nixon health program. Nixon had proposed a $600-million-a-year program of aid to the states for medical benefits. Kerr-Mills provided an estimated $200-million-a-year program.

Conservatives were jubilant. With the Kerr-Mills bill, they had scotched the drive for the socialized medicine proposed by John Kennedy, they said.

But in 1965, Congress enacted the Medicare law, adding medical care to the benefits provided under social security — exactly what socialists had been trying to do since 1935.

In enacting Medicare, Congress did not eliminate the Kerr-Mills program. That was retained and expanded, and is now known as the "medicaid" part of the Medicare law. Medicaid has become worse than Medicare. Medicaid enables state politicians to set up socialized-medicine programs, and then call on the federal government for most of the tax money. Congress has no control over the monster it created.

Thus, conservatives, fighting one type of socialist program with another type, helped saddle the nation with both.

Now, it is just a matter of time before this nation has total, socialized medicine. The new proposal for national compulsory health insurance is already being pushed very hard.

It is always thus.

Once conservatives yield a particle on the constitutional question of whether the federal government has *authority* for a program, they are forever thereafter in retreat. Congressional debates then no longer deal with the fundamental question of whether we shall have illegal socialism in a particular field, but merely with the pragmatic question of how much we will get this year.

The only answer is for the people to elect to Congress *constitutional* conservatives who stand immovable on the principle that, no matter how popular or well-seeming a program, the federal

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government cannot legally participate unless clearly authorized by some specific grant of power in the Constitution.

That plea for the people to elect *constitutional* conservatives has been a refrain in my speeches, broadcasts, books, conversations, and weekly *Reports* for 20 years. I never thought I could paint myself into a corner by repeating such advice; but, in a sense, I did.

More and more in recent years, people have been saying:

"We get the message, Smoot. You don't have to say it again. But we cannot find the *constitutional* conservatives we are supposed to elect. How about *you* showing the way?"

In a way, I felt hoist by my own petard. Put up or shut up, some of my friends seemed to be saying.

So, when American Party leaders in June asked me to be the party's candidate for Senate next year, instead of declining categorically — as was my personal inclination — I said I would give them my answer in December.

Since then, there has been tremendous support for my prospective candidacy. I have received contributions and pledges from people all over the United States, including some from our fighting men in Vietnam.

But the American Party is not an already-established, on-the-ballot political entity in Texas. To get on the ballot next year, the American Party must persuade some 33,000 qualified voters to register in non-voting American Party primaries and refrain from voting in the Republican and Democrat primaries in May.

In the last two months, I have had doubts that this feat can be accomplished. Some American Party officials shared my doubts. Others did not.

By the first of December, I realized I was in a difficult position. Most of the money contributed and pledged to me is from individuals who are not in the American Party movement.

If I announced my candidacy in January, I must start spending that money. But if the American Party failed to qualify for ballot position in May, I would have wasted the money. I could not take that risk with other people's money, sent to me in trust to be used in a political campaign and not in a registration drive.

Consequently, on December 13, I met with American Party leaders and declined their invitation.

During the six-month period when it was known I was contemplating getting into politics, many Texas Republicans have asked me to run for the Senate in their party. Many conservative Democrats have promised to cross party lines and support me if I run as a Republican.

On the other hand, subscribers to my *Report* have paid me the compliment of saying I am accomplishing more good in my present work than I could accomplish in the Senate. They have very strongly urged me to stay out of politics.

I will make a decision soon. A final decision must be made before the end of January.

Meanwhile, my humble and heartfelt thanks to all of you for your advice, encouragement, and support.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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